

NEWS RELEASE

USDA Forest Service Bureau of Land Management
Lincoln National Forest Pecos District
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INCREASED FIRE DANGER WARRANTS LEVEL II FIRE RESTRICTIONS

Alamogordo, NM, (March 27, 2008) – Firefighter, public safety and community protection is always first and foremost when it comes to wildfire season in the West.

Due to increased fire danger on public lands in SE New Mexico, the decision has been made to enact Fire Restrictions, which will take effect on Monday, March 31, 2008, at 8:00 a.m. The Lincoln National Forest (FS) in conjunction with the Roswell BLM Field Office will enact Stage II Fire Restrictions for all Forest Service lands, and BLM lands around Lincoln, New Mexico including Fort Stanton.

“The fall and winter rains and snows did not pan out this season as last year’s memorable moisture which occurred in Southern New Mexico, said Jacqueline Buchanan. The Lincoln has proactively been out in the forest collecting data that supports the decision to enact Stage II fire restrictions. And, this also means, we need everyone’s help to ensure our forest continues to be free of fire and a tourists destination here in southern New Mexico.”

Stage II Restrictions include prohibition of:

1. Building, maintaining, attending or using a fire, campfire, charcoal, broiler, coal, or wood stove fire anywhere within the forest except at identified campground locations;
2. Smoking;
3. Using an explosive (including fireworks);
4. Operating a chainsaw, or other equipment powered by an internal combustion engine, is prohibited from 10:00 am to 1:00 am;
5. Operating or using any internal or external combustion engine without a spark arresting device properly installed, maintained, and in effective working order;
6. Welding or operating acetylene or other torch with open flame;

7. And, possessing or using a motor vehicle off National Forest System roads, except when parking in an area devoid of vegetation within 10 feet of the roadway; and except for parking overnight in Forest Service developed campgrounds and trailheads.

People are allowed to use pressurized liquid or gas stoves, lanterns, or space-heating devices provided such devices meet the Underwriters Laboratory (UL) specifications for safety.

People are allowed to create a fire **ONLY** at the following identified Lincoln National Forest campground or picnic area using the provided fire rings or grills:

Smokey Bear Ranger District – Cedar Creek picnic area (charcoal grill use only)
Sacramento Ranger District - Silver Campground;
Guadalupe Ranger District - Sitting Bull Falls Recreation Area.

Chad Stewart, Fire Management Staff Officer for the Lincoln NF said, “We have been proactive this fire season by bringing on seasonal personnel early after receiving no significant moisture this winter on the Lincoln National Forest. Additional fire crews, engines, and fire prevention personnel throughout the Forest and Pecos Zone are in place and ready to respond. The larger forest fuels such as trees, logs and branches are very dry and with moisture levels so low, the chances of a fire igniting have greatly increased.”

The BLM has been proactive in obtaining additional resources for fire suppression. The Bureau of Land Management has additional engines and fire personnel located in Carlsbad and Roswell.

All of the agencies in southeastern New Mexico would also like to thank the public for their diligence to fire safety so far this year. Most of the catastrophic fires that occur this time of year are human-caused.

Fireworks are prohibited on all National Forest System and Bureau of Land Management lands.

The Villages of Ruidoso, Cloudcroft and other surrounding mountain communities look forward to the public visiting during this time or any time of the year. Camping, hiking, bike riding or enjoying a relaxing picnic within the local area or the Lincoln National Forest can be a very enjoyable and memorable experience.

For specific information on a particular area, please contact your local Forest Service, Bureau of

Land Management or other fire service agency office.

When planning a trip to the Lincoln National Forest or any National Forest, **KNOW BEFORE YOU GO**. For current fire restriction information on public lands in the southwest, please call 1-877-864-6985.

To report a fire, call (575) 434-2286 or toll free 1-877-695-1663.

For fire restrictions and other fire information for all recreation sites in New Mexico, log on to <http://gacc.nifc.gov/swcc> or <http://www.nmfireinfo.com>

For more information on the Lincoln National Forest, please visit our website at:
<http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/lincoln>.

NOTE TO MEDIA:

There are 4 different stages (levels) of restriction/closures in response to Fire risk:

Stage I (1st Level)--**No smoking outside of vehicles, or buildings. No open campfires outside of developed sites. No fireworks.**

Stage II (2nd Level)--**In addition to Stage I, adds prohibitions for explosives, chainsaws or other internal combustion engines (possibly during certain hours), welding, and using a motor vehicle off forest development roads; further restricts use of campfires.**

Stage III (3rd Level)--**The closure of specific areas of the Forest (as detailed in the Closure Order)**

Stage IV (4th Level)--**Full forest closures (as detailed in the Closure Order)**

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